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"South End Mar. 15 1899,
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SOUTH END HOUSE

A University Settlement

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The laws which govern the birth of genius are inscrutable. Since the manual-labor classes are four or five times as numerous as all other classes put together, it is not unlikely that more than half of the best natural genius that is born in the country belongs to them; and of this a great part is fruitless for want of opportunity.—ALFRED MARSHALL, "Principles of Economics."

There are in our great cities quarters in which it would require more of moral enterprise to be only moderately vicious, than for me and my readers to attain the summit of heroic virtue.—The late ANDREW P. PEABODY.

Who is to continue "the campaign of education," and how? I do not hesitate to say that, for this difficult work, we have as yet discovered no agency that, in almost every respect, is at all comparable with the College or University Settlement. This is, verily, work among the foundations.—BISHOP POTTER.

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THE BRUNT OF THE CITY PROBLEM

*These ought ye to have done, but not
to leave the other undone.*

Of late years in Boston large additions have been made to the resources of our great educational institutions. Some of the older charitable foundations have also been much increased. In the meantime, however, certain new undertakings combining the motives both of education and charity have arisen, under the urgency of a situation which has been gradually coming to light.

The vast majority of the population of Boston is made up of working people. It is found that about ten per cent of these — a “submerged tenth” — are affected by charitable agencies. Popular educational institutions, aside from the public schools, probably also touch about ten per cent — an aristocracy of labor.

But what of the eighty per cent, more or less, who are not thus accessible either through their necessities, on the one hand, or their ambitions, on the other. On account of deep-seated industrial, racial, and religious prejudices this great middle class of labor is influenced hardly at all by the older forms of philanthropic effort.

So far as Boston is concerned, the newly devised line of action was first fully expressed in the founding of the South End House,—a university settlement.

At this house it has been convincingly shown that by simple, friendly fellowship it is possible to penetrate into the thick of the eighty per cent—among whom our critical industrial and municipal difficulties centre, in whose conditions of life are found many of the provoking causes of pauperism and crime, who possess among them a large share of the best innate gifts of mind and heart.

The established efforts of education and charity must, of course, not be one whit relaxed; they ought to be more strongly reinforced. Yet the fact remains that there is a vast and imminent problem which is almost wholly out of their range. This is the problem with which the South End House for the past seven years has specifically concerned itself.

SOME WAYS AND MEANS FOR MEETING IT

WAYS

The resident force numbers from four to six men, the length of whose stay averages nearly two years. The Head of the House and the Secretary share the executive responsibilities, and devote their time permanently to the interests of the House. A settlement of young women—under training as kindergartners—in a neighboring street acts in coöperation with the South End House. Upwards of twenty-five associate workers, men and

women from other parts of the city, volunteer for some regular service. There are two buildings in use by the settlement: the residence at No. 6 Rollins Street, where there is a circulating library, a gallery of framed photographs which are loaned out, and a savings bank, besides large and beautiful rooms for social gatherings; and a remodeled tenement house at No. 611 Harrison Avenue, containing a free reading-room for men, kindergarten and club rooms, and a manual-training workshop.

In the first place, the varied interests of a particular tenement-house neighborhood are carefully looked after. By means of an ascending scale of clubs for children, young people, and adults, of both sexes, easy relations are gained with club members, with their families, and with their circles of friends. These clubs have real educational value, but their chief object is to bring personal, moral influences to bear, and to encourage self-help and mutual aid. Through this club work, followed up by much visiting in the homes of the people, the neighborhood, as a whole has been permeated with a better spirit, and there is a marked return feeling of confidence and coöperation on the part of the people toward the House. The settlement in these ways is able to meet the tenement-house problem in its many aspects at close range; to sustain helpful relations with working people in their own homes on the basis of continuous neighborhood acquaintance; to "begin with the children" amid

the home conditions which will so largely determine their destiny; to supply counter-attractions to the saloon which do counter-attract, by retaining much of the saloon's easy good fellowship and local *camaraderie*.

In the next place, having struck root down into the soil of neighborhood life, the work of the settlement branches out so as to reach over the whole of the great working-class district — containing 40,000 inhabitants— which has grown up at the South End. In several large district enterprises the South End House has taken a leading part,—the South End Free Art Exhibition, which has been given twice, and is to be repeated during the present winter; the South End Musical Union, which for the past four years has carried on a series of concerts and conducted singing classes, its work being now happily superseded by the Municipal Concerts and the People's Singing Classes; and the Dover Street Bath House,—a new object of civic pride in Boston,—with whose inception, construction, and administrative policy the settlement has all along been closely identified. Residents of the House bring the results of wide experience and advanced training to bear upon the work of a variety of charitable, reformatory, philanthropic, educational, industrial, political, and religious organizations, making positive contributions to their work, and endeavoring to secure more coöperation among them. They keep in touch with

the police authorities, urge action against slums on the part of the Board of Health, arrange conferences with local school-teachers, take part in an association of local clergymen, initiate plans for joint effort on the part of social workers, enter with patience and discretion into the task of political reform. Two of the residents represent the district on municipal boards appointed by the Mayor. Most important of all, the residents of the House have for several years been engaged upon an exhaustive study of the district,—recently published by Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. under the title “*The City Wilderness*,”—which will do much toward placing the complicated question of social improvement in this part of the city beyond the region of surmise and upon a basis of known fact.

Again, the South End House provides a neutral meeting ground for separated classes of people who otherwise would be ignorant of, if not hostile to, one another. It serves the cause of industrial peace by bringing business and professional men into conference with workingmen. Residents have several times been asked by trade-union men to arbitrate in case of strike. They are constantly exchanging with groups of workingmen the student’s wider knowledge of economic questions for the worker’s practical experience of industrial affairs. The House serves also to bring about common understanding between people of divergent racial and religious

loyalties; and thus embodies a thoroughgoing method for dealing with the most vital of our foreign problems, the one at home. Especial pains are taken in the way of encouraging all helpful forms of association among the people themselves, of holding such organizations true to their best purposes, and of acting conjointly with them in promoting measures for the common good.

The South End House is not limited to its influence on the inner life of the city. As a kind of a laboratory and graduate training school, no bounds can be put to the results of its work. Its past residents, men of various callings in life, are doing important service in many sections of the country; and the House has had as temporary guests students of social questions from all parts of the world. Much has been done, through lectures and pamphlets, toward spreading the ethical motive of the settlement, and making available the results of its experience. "The City Wilderness," apart from its more specific use in Boston, is already said by competent authorities to be one of the most valuable contributions yet made toward the general study of American working-class conditions.

MEANS

During these experimental years it has been possible, as a result of large contributions of time on the part of two or three residents, to carry on all this work upon a

very small income—never as much as \$5,000. This was, in the nature of the case, a provisional arrangement. The South End House has thus, under great limitations, demonstrated by experiment the special need and value of its work. Moreover, as the result of penetrating scientific investigation, it has new and important projects in hand. It seeks, therefore, such an enlargement of its financial resources as will place it upon a reasonably adequate footing for its future.

For this purpose an increase of \$2,000 in its annual income is required.

All who approve of the aims of the settlement are invited to become members of the South End House Association. Members pay \$3 and upwards per year.

There is special need of donations in sums of \$25, \$50, and \$100, toward meeting each year's expenses.

The Association—which is an incorporated body—already has a few thousand dollars as the nucleus of a permanent fund. The increase of this endowment is respectfully commended as an object of larger beneficence.

SOUTH END HOUSE ASSOCIATION

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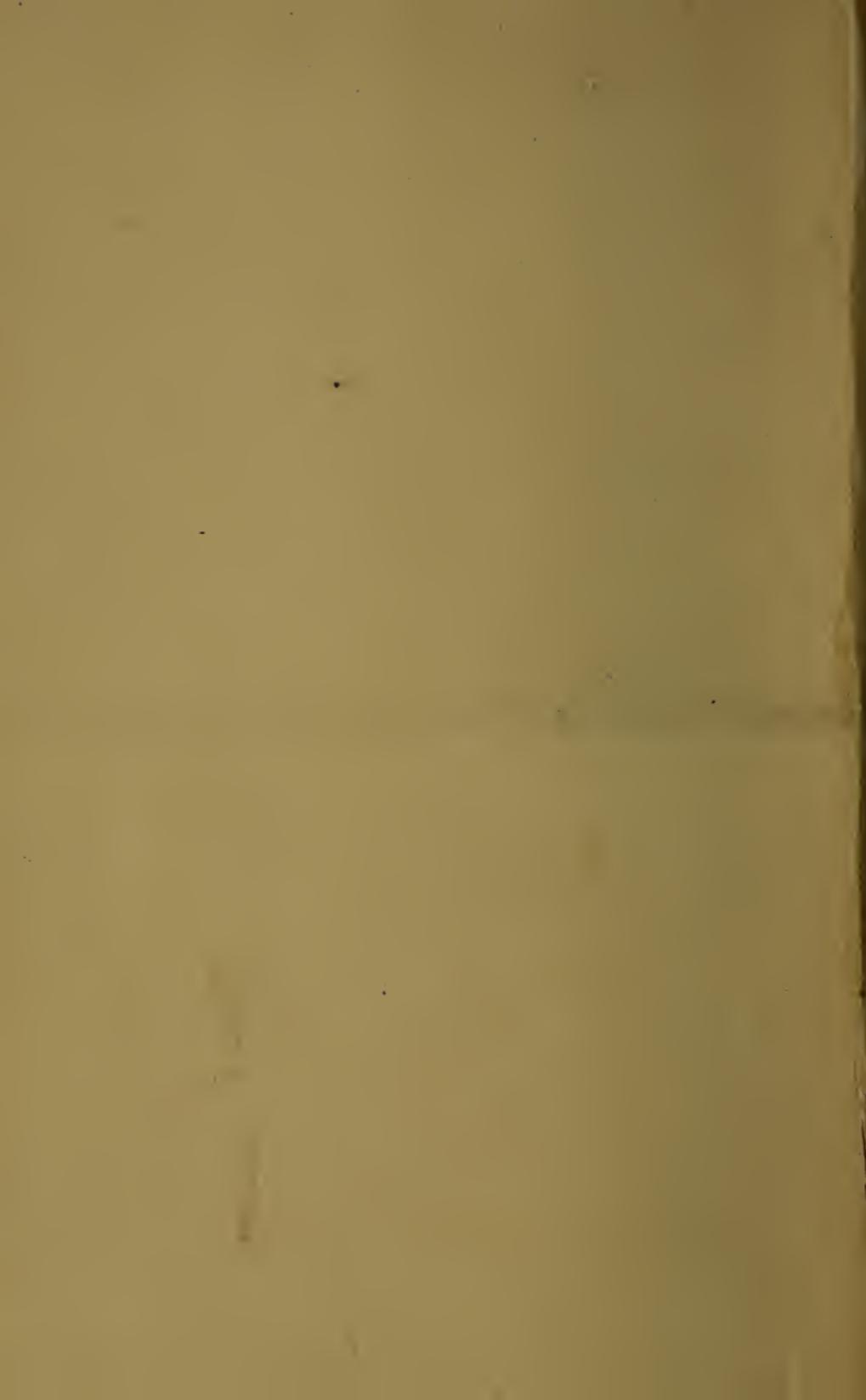
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